

LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: December 9, 2020
Time: 6:30PM
Location: City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852

1. SALUTE TO FLAG

2. ROLL CALL

On a roll call at 6:36 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Martin, Ms. Clark, Mr. Descoteaux, Mr. Dillon, Ms. Doherty, Mr. Hoey and Mayor Leahy.

3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

3.1. Communication Remote Participation: Members of the public may view the meeting via LTC and those wishing to speak regarding a specific agenda item shall register to speak in advance of the meeting by sending email to the Superintendent indicating the agenda item, a phone number and email address so we can provide a zoom link to access the meeting. Email address is mpalazzo@Lowell.k12.Ma.us if no access to email you may contact us at 978-674-4324. All Requests must be submitted before 3:00 PM on The Day of Meeting.

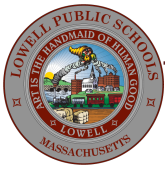
4. MINUTES

4.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Mr. Dillon made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of November 18, 2020 and the Regular Scheduled Meeting Minutes of the Lowell School Committee of November 18, 2020 and to place them on file; seconded by Mr. Doherty. 7 yeas
APPROVED

4.2. Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Mr. Dillon made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of November 18, 2020 and the Regular Scheduled Meeting Minutes of the Lowell School Committee of November 18, 2020 and to place them on file; seconded by Mr. Doherty. 7 yeas
APPROVED



5. PERMISSION TO ENTER

5.1. Permission to Enter: December 9, 2020

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 7 years
APPROVED**

6. MEMORIALS

6.1. Marybeth O’Neil, Retired Lowell High School Teacher

6.2. Gigi Pappas, Mother Of Molly Kelley-Muon, Butler School Teacher and U.T.L. Middle School Vice President

6.3. Ann Marie Laforge, Retired Lincoln and Shaughnessy School Teacher

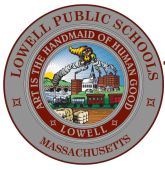
6.4. Catherine Morrill, Retired Greenhalge School Teacher.

7. SUBCOMMITTEES

7.1. Human Resources & Labor Relations Subcommittee: Report and Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, November 19, 2020 [Hilary Clark, Chairperson]

Ms. Clark, Chairperson of the Human Resources & Labor Relations Subcommittee informed the Committee that the Superintendent’s recommended SY2020-2021 goals for evaluation are as follows:

1. Improve academics and student achievement at every school site which includes:
 - ❖ School Quality and Improvement Plans
 - ❖ Targeted Support for Chronically Underperforming Schools
 - ❖ Digital Learning Plan
 - ❖ Secondary School Reform
2. Improve operation efficiency across the system which includes:
 - ❖ Data-Driven Decision-Making
 - ❖ Diversity Recruitment and Hiring
 - ❖ Fair Student Funding
 - ❖ Transportation System Redesign
3. Ensure that every school is safe and welcoming to every student and every family, every day which includes:
 - ❖ Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices
 - ❖ Social Emotional Learning
 - ❖ Facility Safety Audits
 - ❖ School Assignment Policy Analysis
4. Increase community engagement and empower families as partners in the educational process which includes:



- ❖ Communication and Outreach to Families of Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds
- ❖ Site-Based Budgeting
- ❖ Portrait of a Graduate
- ❖ Lowell Student Advisory Council

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to accept and approve the goals presented for the Superintendent's Evaluation; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 7 yeas APPROVED

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 7 yeas APPROVED

8. MOTIONS

8.1. [By Bob Hoey]: Request that the Superintendent review the feasibility of setting up one or more locations for families of remote learners enrolled in Lowell Public Schools to safely access school district Social Emotional Learning (SEL) resources and services in-person.

Mr. Hoey made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Clark. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.2. [By Bob Hoey]: Request that the Superintendent look into the feasibility of adding a separate line item for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in the 2021-2022 Budget.

Mr. Hoey made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Clark. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.3. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a report on the in-person substantially separate special education programs. The report should include data on each program's daily attendance rates for staff and students, latest safety recommendations and planned or new safety protocols.

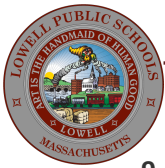
Ms. Doherty requested that the report include transportation as well as data.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.4. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a comprehensive, data-driven report on Remote Learning throughout the district. The report should include: daily attendance rates for students and staff by grade level/school; class sizes by grade level/school—identifying those classes that were initially in-person vs always remote; the number of Florida Virtual student licenses accessed since Nov. 15 by grade and school, the number of classrooms being led by paraprofessionals by grade level/school. In addition, state law requires students receive daily time on learning of 5 to 5½ hours depending on grade level: What protocols are in place to ensure consistency in structured learning time and quality of instruction districtwide? How will the district re-align staffing support to mitigate the impact of significant differences in class sizes?

Shelagh Gallagher registered and spoke on the above motion (#8.4).

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED



9. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

9.1. COVID-19 Update

Katie Urbine registered and spoke on the above Report of the Superintendent (#9.1).

Dr. Hall gave the Committee a COVID-19 Data monitoring update that included the Average Daily Incidence Rate per 100,000 and Percent Positivity Rate. It also reported the number of total staff and students as reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) of positive COVID cases, total number of quarantined due to in-person instruction, total number of quarantined due to outside school factors, and the number of quarantined as of December 2, 2020. Dr. Hall spoke about the possibility of a COVID-19 testing pilot program and the projection and impact of medical exemptions for remote work.

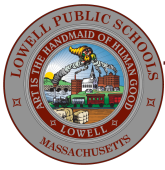
Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.2. Budget Update

Superintendent Boyd and Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer provided an update to the Committee on the budget. Ms. Turner stated that the FY21 state budget process is still ongoing due to the pandemic and economic crisis. The Senate Ways and Means Budget Proposal was recently released and the cherry sheet shows that they maintained the House Budget proposed amount of \$166,954,483 and that the district has not suffered any additional reductions. She stated that despite the significant financial concerns, we project savings again this year. She stated that due to hiring freezes, the district may see up to \$4,500,000 in possible salary savings and due to the minimal in person instruction, bus use was drastically reduced. She stated that there is at least a \$2,000,000 savings with transportation and the substitute account will also see a savings of nearly \$1,000,000. Currently, the health insurance line shows a surplus which is a result of the hiring freeze as well. She stated that the total savings are projected to be approximately \$7,500,000. The districts revolving account balances are now at a healthy level and the Circuit Breaker account's current balance is \$4.1 million and is expected to maintain a healthy balance of \$3.5 million despite the budgeted offset to this account to balance the FY21 budget. The revolving accounts are projected to maintain the improved balances except for when the rules include limits. The projected savings will require additional analysis to help with projected budget considerations. The savings listed above can be used to maintain revolving account balances, lift the hiring freeze and fund the costs associated with digital learning. The district could also offset FY22 costs such as curriculum, supplies and annual technology costs by pre-purchasing as the district did with the FY21 budget. Ms. Turner concluded by stating that the Committee will be updated with both the projected savings and needs monthly so the district can maximize opportunities through constant planning.

Ms. Clark made a motion to examine the quality of the food from Aramark, the percentage of local food as well as look at the amount the district wants to spend per meal; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



9.3. Key Performance Indicators: Quarter 1 Review

Dr. Guillory, Chief Schools Officer provided the Committee Key Performance Indicators: Quarter 1 Review. The review included the following:

- KPI Matrix
- Data-driven decision making
- Current status of KPI Scorecard
- Next Steps

The Key Performance Indicators are as follows:

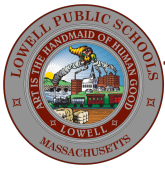
- ✓ On-Track to Graduation
- ✓ Course Grades
- ✓ Math and ELA Proficiency
- ✓ Early Literacy
- ✓ Student Discipline
- ✓ Social Emotional Learning
- ✓ Student Attendance
- ✓ Chronic Absenteeism
- ✓ Facility Safety
- ✓ Meal Distribution
- ✓ Diversity Hiring
- ✓ Teacher Attendance
- ✓ Substitute Fill Rate
- ✓ In-Person/Virtual Enrollment
- ✓ PPE Stockpile
- ✓ Community Satisfaction
- ✓ Language Access
- ✓ School-Site Council Participation
- ✓ Parent/Teacher Conference Participation

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.4. Lowell Teacher Academy Update

Ms. Maggio, Director of the Lowell Teacher Academy provided a report to the Committee that addressed the LTA Induction Program, The Lowell Program and the future of the Lowell Teacher Academy.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



9.5. Enrollment Report

The district enrollment report provided to the Committee showed the breakdown by school and grade through December 4, 2020.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.6. Home Education

Superintendent Boyd recommended that the following parents/guardians be allowed to home educate their child:

Shannon Ceballos
89 Chestnut Street

Mr. Dillon made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED

10. NEW BUSINESS

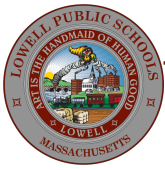
10.1. Approval of Temporary Amendment to School Assignment Policy File JCA for 2020-2021 School Year

Superintendent Boyd provided a temporary amendment for the Committee's review and consideration. Superintendent Boyd recommended the following updates to the School Assignment Policy 2021 Addendum File: JCA. He stated that data gathered through family surveys indicate that most families - who were previously assigned to in-person learning for the original Phase 1 of our re-opening plan following the assignment lottery in September - anticipate returning for in-person learning. However, a small percentage have now decided that remote learning is a better fit for their children and plan to remain remote even if the district expands in-person learning. As a result, there are anticipated vacancies at some grade levels in some school locations within the 25% in-person capacity limits that were established for Phase 1. The recommended updates in the attached policy build on the lessons learned from the first round of student assignments and leverage the best thinking of school-based leaders and centralized support staff to facilitate a more efficient process, ensuring that the most vulnerable learners at each school are able to access every available in-person seat at every school as soon as the local health data supports a full return to Phase 1 of in-person learning.

Mr. Dillon made a motion to approve the Temporary Amendment to School Assignment Policy File JCA for the 2020-2021 School Year; seconded by Ms. Clark. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.2. Naming and Dedication of Lowell High School Spaces

Mayor Leahy informed the Committee that he is gathering information on this and will provide the Committee with an update regarding the naming and dedication of Lowell High School spaces.



10.3. Research Proposal – Learning During a Pandemic

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that a request was submitted to the Lowell Public Schools from the University of Washington’s Center on Reinventing Public Education in partnership with SRI International and the Center for Public Research and Leadership at the Columbia Law school, and with support from the Barr Foundation. The research team expressed interest in conducting a study to better understand how New England high schools sustained learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery period. The goal is to identify the barriers, strategies and solutions that were implemented during the pandemic and document ways school systems can rebuild once the pandemic has passed. The research team will conduct 30-45 minute virtual interviews with central office and high school leaders, and student and teacher volunteers. Small stipends will be available to compensate student and teacher volunteers for their time and participation.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve the Research Proposal – Learning During a Pandemic; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.4. Vote to Accept Grant Award of \$2,000 from New England Dairy & Food Council

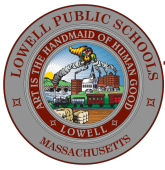
Superintendent Boyd recommended that the School Committee vote to accept a gift of \$2,000.00 with conditions from the New England Dairy & Food Council. The conditions of the “gift” are reasonable and are one year in duration.

Mr. Dillon made a motion to accept the Grant Award of \$2,000 from New England Dairy & Food Council; seconded by Ms. Clark. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.5. Vote to Accept Grant Award of \$10,000 from AHP Architects, Inc.

Ms. Desmond, Chief Academic Officer informed the Committee that AHP Architects, Inc. has committed funds to help support Lowell High School (LHS) students and families. This financial commitment is by a Massachusetts-based architecture and interior design firm for a total of \$10,000.00

Mr. Dillon made a motion to accept the Grant Award of \$10,000 from AHP Architects, Inc.; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED



11. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Dillon made a motion to adjourn at 8:56 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 7 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

**Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D., Superintendent and
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee**

JDB/mes